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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/614,468	07/11/2000	Mead C. Killion	12463US02	2071

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EXAMINER

LAO, LUN S

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2643

DATE MAILED: 01/14/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/614,468

Applicant(s)

KILLION ET AL.

Examiner

Lun-See Lao

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 November 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Introduction

1. Claim 1-8 of U.S. application 09/076,533 filed on 05/12/98 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 22, 24 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Berland (US PAT. 4,142,072).

Consider claim 22, Berland teaches a method of operating a microphone comprising:

plugging a sound inlet tube (see fig.1 3);
sensing that the sound inlet tube is plugged;
selecting a first output based on sensing (by sound pressure) that the sound inlet tube is plugged;
unplugging the sound inlet tube (3);
sensing (by sound pressure) that the sound inlet tube is unplugged (see fig.2); and
selecting a second output based on sensing that the sound inlet tube is unplugged (see col.2 line 53-col.3 line9).

Consider claim 24, Berland teaches a method of operating a microphone comprising:

receiving an actuator switch (see fig.1, 1) in a first position in which a sound inlet tube is plugged;

sensing (see fig.3) that the actuator switch (1) is in the first position; receiving the actuator switch in a second position in which the sound inlet tube is unplugged (see fig.2);

sensing (see fig.3) that the actuator switch is in the second position; and selecting a first output if the actuator switch (1) is in the first position and a second output if the actuator switch (1) is in the second position (see col.2 line 53-col.3 line 9).

Consider claim 26, Berland teaches a method of operating a microphone comprising:

plugging a sound inlet tube (see fig.1 (3));

unplugging the sound inlet tube (3);

sensing (by sound pressure) whether the sound inlet tube is plugged (see fig.1) or unplugged (see fig.2); and selecting an output based on the sensing (by sound pressure and see col.2 line 53-col.3 line 9).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-4, 7, 9-14, 17 and 19-21, 23, 25, 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.

103(a) as being unpatentable over Berland (US PAT 4,142,072) in view of Ruegg (US PAT. 3,875,349).

Consider claim 1, Berland teaches a microphone assembly comprising:

a front inlet tube (see fig.5 (13));

a rear inlet tube (11);

a microphone cartridge (7) having a front inlet port (2) acoustically coupled to the front inlet tube (13) and a rear inlet port (3) acoustically coupled to the rear inlet tube (11);

an actuator switch (1) being movable between a first position in which the rear inlet tube is plugged (see fig.1) and a second position in which the rear inlet tube is unplugged (see fig.2). but Berland does not clearly teach a circuitry for sensing whether the actuator switch is in the first position or the second position, and for selecting an output based upon the position sensed.

However, Ruegg teaches a circuitry for sensing whether the actuator switch (see fig.1, 17) is in the first position or the second position, and for selecting an output based upon the position sensed (see col.2line 60-col.3 line13).

Therefore, it would have obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of Ruegg into Berland to provide the

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microphone system possesses a first microphone having spherical sensitivity characteristics and second microphone with directional sensitivity characteristics, and wherein the amplifier can be selectively switched to either one of both microphones.

Consider claim 12, Barland teaches a microphone assembly comprising:

- a microphone cartridge having a diaphragm (membrane and see fig.1 (8));

- a first inlet tube (2) acoustically coupled to a first side of the diaphragm (8);

- a second inlet tube (3) acoustically coupled to a second side of the diaphragm (8);

- an actuator switch (1) being movable between a first position in which the second inlet tube is plugged (see fig.1) and a second position in which the second inlet tube is unplugged (see fig.2). But Barland does not clearly teach a circuitry for selecting a first output when the actuator switch is in the first position, and a second output when the actuator switch is in the second position.

However, Ruegg teaches a circuitry (see figs. 1-2 and 5) for selecting a first output when the actuator switch (17) is in the first position, and a second output when the actuator switch is in the second position (see col.2 line 60-col.3 line 13).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of Ruegg into Barland to provide the microphone system possesses a first microphone having spherical sensitivity

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characteristics and second microphone with directional sensitivity characteristics, and wherein the amplifier can be selectively switched to either one of both microphones.

Consider claims 2-4 and 13-14, Ruegg teaches the circuitry comprises an electronic contact and sensor switch (see figs. 1-2, 5 and (17, 23)) the microphone assembly of the electronic contact and sensor switch (see fig. 2, (23)) comprises first and second conductors (13, 14); and the microphone assembly of the actuator switch (23) has an electrical contact mounted therewith for providing electrical conduction between the first and second conductors (13, 14 and see col. 2 line 60-col. 3 line).

Consider claims 7 and 17 Berland teaches the microphone assembly of the circuitry inherently selects an output having higher gain when the actuator switch is in first (omnidirectional) position, and an output having lower gain when the actuator switch is in the second position (direction and see col. 2 line 53-col. 3 line 9).

Consider claims 9-11 and 19-20, Barland teaches the microphone assembly of the further comprising a housing (see fig. 1), and wherein the circuitry (see fig. 3) is at least partially integral to the housing (see col. 2 line 53-col. 3 line 9); and the circuitry (see fig. 3) is at least partially integral to the microphone cartridge (see col. 2 lines 24-25).

Consider claim 21, Ruegg teaches the output selected (see fig. 5, 17) is input to hearing aid circuitry (see col. 4 line 63-col. 5 line 45).

Consider claims 23, 25, 27, Barland does not clearly teach further comprising inputting the selected output to hearing aid circuitry.

However, Ruegg teaches further comprising inputting the selected output (see fig.5, 17) to hearing aid circuitry (see col.4 line 63-col.5 line 45).

Therefore, it would have obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of Ruegg into Berland to improved construction of hearing aid which combines the advantages of a hearing aid equipped with a microphone having direction characteristics with a hearing aid equipped with a microphone having spherical sensitivity characteristic while avoiding the drawbacks present when only using a microphone in a hearing aid having one or the other of such sensitivity characteristics.

6. Claims 5-6, 8 and 15-16, 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Berland (US PAT 4,142,072) as modified by Ruegg (US PAT. 3,875,349) as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Killion (US PAT. 6,101,258).

Consider claims 5 –6 and 15-16, Berland teaches the circuitry selects an equalized output when the actuator switch is in the second position in response to no conduction between the first and second conductors (see col.2 line 53-col.3 line 9), but Berland does not clearly teaches the microphone assembly of the circuitry (see fig.3) selects a non-equalized output when the actuator switch (see fig.2, 1) is in the first position (onmidirection) in response to conduction between the first and second conductors provided by the electrical contact.

However, Killion teaches the microphone assembly of the circuitry (see fig.1) selects an non-equalized (62) output when the actuator switch (see fig.1, 62) is in the first position (omnidirection), and an equalized (40) output when the actuator switch (see fig.1, 50) is in the second position (direction), and the microphone assembly of the circuitry (see fig.1) selects a non-equalized (62) output when the actuator switch (see fig.1, 55) is in the first position (onmidirection) in response to conduction between the first and second conductors (55) provided by the electrical contact.

Therefore, it would have obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of Killion into Barland to provide improved speech intelligibility in noise to the wearer of a small in the ear hearing aid.

Consider claims 8 and 18, Barland and Ruegg do not clearly teach the microphone assembly of the circuitry selects an output having lower environmental noise reduction when the actuator switch is in the first position, and an output having higher environmental noise reduction when the actuator switch is in the second position.

However, Killion teaches the microphone assembly of the circuitry selects an output having lower environmental noise reduction when the actuator switch is in the first position (omnidirection), and an output having higher environmental noise reduction when the actuator switch is in the second position (direction)(see col.3 lines 23-66).

Therefore, it would have obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of Barland and Ruegg into the teaching of Killion to provide improved speech intelligibility in noise to the wearer of a small in the ear hearing aid.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-27 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

As to applicant's argument regarding the "circuitry" (remarks, page 4, 3rd Paragraph), it is not recited in the rejected claims. See claims 22, 24 and 26 for detailed discussions.

As to applicant's argument to the "perform the function of sensing and selecting" (see page 5, fourth paragraph), it is inherently done by a circuitry or a human.

Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Hagen (US PAT 6,389,142) is cited to show other related microphone for hearing aid and communications applications having switchable polar and frequency response characteristics.

9. Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

or faxed to: (703) 872-9306

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA., Sixth Floor (Receptionist).


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lao,Lun-See whose telephone number is (703) 305-2259. The examiner

can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:00 to 6:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Curtis Kuntz, can be reached on (703) 305-4708.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Technology Center 2600 whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.

Lao, Lun-See
Patent Examiner
US Patent and Trademark Office
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DUC NGUYEN
PRIMARY EXAMINER